

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

English for Academic and Professional Purposes

Quarter 1 – Week 6

Critical Approaches in Writing a Critique Paper

Department of Education • Republic of the Philippines



What is it?

A **critique** is a careful analysis of an argument to determine what is said, how well the points are made, what assumptions underlie the argument, what issues are overlooked, and what implications are drawn from such observations. It is a systematic, yet personal response and evaluation of what you read.

Opening Notes

Ask yourself:

- What is the nature of the piece?
- Who wrote it, why, and what are his/her qualifications?
- What is the significance of the piece?
- What are its objectives?
- How well are they achieved?
- What is the design or method for the piece?
- Does the design help the piece achieve its objectives?
- What is the particular appeal or lack of appeal?
- What assumptions underlie the piece?
- Are they offensive? Obvious?
- How do the assumptions and biases affect the validity of the piece?



What is it?

Critical Approaches in Writing a Critique/Review:

1. Formalist Criticism

- Analysis on the formal feature of the subject not on the profile of the creator.

2. Biographical Criticism

- Relate the life of the creator to the subject

3. Historical Criticism

- Analysis of social, cultural & intellectual context surrounding the text

4. Gender Criticism (Feminism)

- Examines how sexual identity influences the creation and reception of the subject

5. Psychological Criticism

- Investigates the creative process of the artist.
- Nature of Literary genius
- How does it relate to normal mental functions

6. Sociological Criticism (Marxism)

- Cultural, economic & Political
- Relationship between the subject and the creator

7. Reader-Response Criticism

- describe what happens in the reader's mind while interpreting a text



What is it?

SAMPLE CRITIQUE PAPERS

SAMPLE # 1

Chimes Collide with Meter

Formalist's Criticism on Christopher Marlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*
Candelaria, Jacine M.

The purpose of poems is to show its blueprints and let the readers listen behind the melody of the written words. Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" is a great example of regular rhyme and meter. It is written in iambic tetrameter, which means there are four iambs per line, making each line paint stress on the second syllable of each meter. The basic rhyme scheme is AABB. So perfect that it perfectly sounds more like a song than a poem.

It sounds a little sing-songy when read aloud. Marlowe avoids this effect by peppering his lines with poetic devices that sneakily shake things up and steer clear of the nursery rhyme curse. Take a look at this couplet form from the third stanza:

"And I will make thee beds of roses,

And a thousand fragrant posies (9-10)

Looking back to the poem, Marlowe avoids sounding like Little Bo Peep, and finds a way to add up color within the lines. He creates a metrical musicality that mirrors the springiness of the countryside in which the speaker wants his lover to live.

Pastoral poetry often characterized by state of contentment, innocence and romantic love. Rural country folks are presented in an idealized natural setting and they contemplate their perfect and peaceful world. It uses idyllic images rather than realistic ideas and focuses on the present time.

"Passionate Shepherd to His Love" is a mere example. Here, the persona is a shepherd who pledges to do impossible things for his beloved, only if the woman of his desires will be willing to accept his pleas.



What is it?

SAMPLE # 2

In rage for grains

Reader Response Criticism on Suzanne Collins' The Hunger Games

Candelaria, Jacine M.

In life, one must learn to struggle in order to survive. One has to die in order to live. And one has to sacrifice in order to gain the glory of victory. In Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*, the superiority and immense brutality of the Capitol of the country of Panem are widely manifested throughout the novel. There is a tight grip of the officials on the neck of the society. They don't have any choice but to adhere to the rules established, whether it favors their will or not.

The novel shows how the people today foresee that if World War 3 sparked, it is possible that the Hunger Games will be set on fire, that each family will risk one member in order to survive and quench themselves from thirst, hunger, scarcity of resources, and be released from the steel hands of tyrant rulers.

When Katniss Everdeen's sister, Prim, was chosen to be the one who will take part in the Hunger Games, Katniss volunteered in Prim's place. This is a sign of sacrificial nature of the protagonist. It even entertains security. On his family's side considering that she lost his father years later because of mine explosion.

Having Peeta Mellark as her partner in District 12, Katniss has developed love for him and Peeta for her as well. The romance, care, and love they've shown in the story foreshadows that love really conquers all, that both would resort to suicide rather than killing each other.

Being chosen as participant in the Hunger Games is a curse but for others, it's glory. Well, life is a matter of choice. Likewise, decisions are scary yet often become permanent.

The novel is tragic. What makes it tragic is the existence of bloodshed, war, murder, utility of deadly weapons such as bow and arrow, spear, poisonous berries, and rebellions.



What is it?

SAMPLE #3

Virginia in the Face of Lenore

Biographical Criticism on E. A. Poe's The Raven

Candelaria, Jacine M.

In "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe, the speaker is continually losing his mind as he mourns the death of his lover, Lenore. Poe was able to maintain a melancholy feeling throughout his poem using the refrain "nevermore" and following some very strict, self-set rules. His rhythm is also very structured and unwavering.

The tone of "The Raven" is morbid and depressing. Poe used a man who had lost his lover, because losing a loved one is the grimmest subject there is. Poe had a raven, an already grim animal, to repeat the word "nevermore" whenever the narrator would speak to it. One other way Poe increased the melancholy effect is the torture of the narrator. The answer the narrator received each time was already predetermined and both the reader and the narrator knew what the reply was going to be; therefore continuously torturing the narrator. It prolongs the state of grief and depression.

Probably the poem is dedicated by Poe to Virginia Clemm, his wife who died of tuberculosis two years after its publication. Most likely, he wrote "The Raven" during those times when his wife was suffering from the disease. He knew for a moment that she'll be gone so this one pays tribute for her and shows how miserable his life was at the state of knowing that he can no longer have Virginia for the rest of his life.

Besides, his literary works are characterized as gloomy, gothic, depressing, and frustrating. He's best known for his tales of mystery and macabre. Perhaps it is based on his personal experiences: orphaned at a young age when his mother died shortly after his father abandoned the family, taken by John and Frances Allan but never formally adopted, and attended the University of Virginia for one semester but left due to lack of money.

All of these were possible factors behind Poe's creation of "The Raven" including his other masterpieces.



What is it?

The Structure and Language of Critique

Critiques are an important rhetorical pattern in academic writing as they present a balanced view of things. Critiques, however, are based not only on personal perspective but should be grounded on actual observations. Here are some tips in developing your critique:

1. Remember that the critique should be accessible to the audience. Therefore, providing background information for the readers will be helpful. Including the central ideas of the book, the concept, the event, or the movie to be critiqued is necessary.
2. Relating your critique to greater realities will also help as you ground your critique on the wider scheme of things. For instance, what subject/theme does the movie, concept, book, or event address? Are there questions that people constantly ask that this particular subject/theme you are reviewing can answer?

In general, the critique should be organized in the following manner

1. The first part should provide readers a sense of the ideas you want to tackle. (What are some problems people face in their daily lives? What are some debated topics discussed among groups concerning the community?)
2. The next part should provide a summary of the concept.
3. Strengths and weaknesses should be part of the critique. Remember that this is challenging and requires tact.
4. The final section of the critique should include the final recommendations of the author. For instance, is the movie, book, gadget, event, or concept a good investment of time, effort and money? What background knowledge does one need to see or use them? Will other activities help to appreciate these?